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SUBJECT: Foreign Minister Thambwe's November 11
briefing on Nairobi, SADC summits

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Foreign Minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba convoked ambassadors November 11 for a briefing on the summits in Nairobi on November 7 and in Johannesburg on November 9. Nairobi had reaffirmed the Amani and Nairobi processes as the "only framework" for resolving the conflict in the eastern DRC. The DRC is willing to renew diplomatic relations with Rwanda but will do so gradually, probably by first opening consulates along the border. The joint "4 by 4 commission" (four Congolese, four Rwandans) would continue its regular meetings. Press reports are true that GDRC has called for a cessation of hostilities in the Ituri district to allow LRA troops to go to designated areas on the Southern Sudan border in anticipation of the signing of a peace agreement with the government of Uganda. Relations with Uganda are improving; joint Ugandan-Congolese military patrols within the DRC are under consideration. Support from SADC members for the GDRC, as decided at the November 9 summit, will contribute to a definitive peace agreement in the east. Thambwe will leave soon to consult with ECCAS members to enlist their support for the DRC. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Foreign Ministry notified embassies in the evening hours of November 10 that Minister Thambwe wished to meet the next morning to update P-5 and other UN Security Council ambassadors on the just-ended Nairobi and Johannesburg summits. Present were ambassadors of China, France, Russia, the UK, Belgium, and South Africa plus the U.S. Charge. Also invited was the ambassador of Angola. MONUC's senior political advisor represented SRSG Doss. Seated beside Foreign Minister Thambwe was new defense minister Charles Mwanda Nsimba.

Nairobi reaffirms existing framework

¶3. (SBU) Thambwe characterized the Nairobi discussions as "intense and very frank." He asserted that the summit's two most important decisions were: (1) to insist on the continuation of a ceasefire in the conflict zone and to restore the ceasefire by force if it is broken; and (2) that the Nairobi and Amani processes remain the "only framework" for dealing with the conflict. Regarding the latter, he said this meant there would be "no face-to-face meetings between Kabila and Nkunda." The minister noted that the GDRC had high expectations for the "Facilitation Commission" of former presidents Olesegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Benjamin Mpaka of Tanzania to ensure implementation of the Nairobi Communique and the Amani accords. He also stated that his government understood these processes applied equally to the FDLR and the CNDP.

Rwandan-Congolese relations

¶4. (SBU) The French ambassador asked if progress had been made in Nairobi on resuming diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda. Thambwe answered that the GRDC has taken steps to rid the Rwandan compound in Kinshasa of squatters so that it can be renovated in time for the return of its occupants. The Congolese public,

however, which believed that most of Nkunda's army consisted of Rwandans, was not yet ready to accept a Rwandan diplomatic presence here. Thambwe stated that the government was more likely to adopt a gradual approach, in coordination with the GOR, setting up two Congolese consulates in Rwanda just inside the border and authorizing the Rwanda Government to do likewise just inside the DRC.

Shuttle diplomacy to continue

15. (SBU) French ambassador also encouraged Thambwe to maintain a dialogue with Rwanda. Minister noted that each government's four-member delegations would continue with regular meetings, shuttling back and forth between the two capitals in an effort to keep the lines of communication open and to advance certain goals. Thambwe called this effort the "4X4 commission."

Cessation of hostilities with LRA

16. (SBU) U.S. charge asked Thambwe if he had seen press reports from Southern Sudan regarding a meeting between President Kabila and SS Vice-President Reik Marchar during the Nairobi summit. Thambwe replied that he was present with Kabila at the meeting and that the press reports were correct. In this connection he noted that:

-- Kabila has agreed to open a corridor so that LRA soldiers can go to the South Sudanese border to lay down their arms and repatriate to Uganda.

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-- The FARDC will not shoot at LRA members proceeding north in the corridor to the border with South Sudan.

-- Kabila has agreed to allow members of the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT) to work alongside MONUC forces based in Dungu and other areas inside DR Congo to monitor the movement and activities of the LRA.

-- These agreements are based on the DRC's desire to help Uganda in getting Kony to adhere (I said "sign"; the Minister responded "adhere") to the demobilization agreement.

17. (SBU) Earlier in the meeting Thambwe stated that relations with Uganda were improving rapidly. The two countries had "common economic interests," including joint efforts to exploit petroleum deposits in Lake Albert. He stated the DRC was giving consideration to allowing the Ugandan military into the DRC to conduct operations with the FARDC against vis-a-vis groups.

SADC summit and possible ECCAS meeting

18. (SBU) Thambwe did not speak at length regarding the SADC summit. He noted that participants had decided to create three military commissions (evaluation, technical, and surveillance) which would travel shortly to the DRC to report on the situation. He mentioned the national composition of each commission. (Note: Angola will participate in all three. End note.) Thambwe expressed confidence that SADC's support would contribute to the quest for peace in the region. Thambwe ended the meeting by noting that he would leave soon to consult with several Central African nations and that ECCAS might also convene a summit in the near future to discuss the situation in the eastern Congo.

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